

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or  
5 biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.
2. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, said emulsifier  
10 comprising a silicone emulsifier.
3. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 2, said silicone emulsifier comprising lauryl methicone copolyol, cetyl dimethicone copolyol, a mixture of dimethicone copolyol and cyclomethicone, or a mixture of cetyl dimethicone  
15 copolyol with polyglyceryl-4 isostearate and hexyl laurate.
4. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, further comprising a coemulsifier having an HLB greater than 6.
- 20 5. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 4, said coemulsifier comprising cetareth-20.
6. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, the volume proportion of glycol/hydroglycol, relative to the total volume of the dispersed phase, ranging  
25 from 10% and 100%.
7. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, said dispersed hydrophilic phase comprising at least one glycol selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, hexylene glycol and dipropylene glycol.

8. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, the water activity  $a_w$  of said dispersed hydrophilic phase being less than 0.85.
9. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, said DHEA and/or  
5 chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof being solubilized in said dispersed hydrophilic phase.
10. A stable, recrystallization-resistant triple invert emulsion comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or  
10 biological precursor or derivative thereof, said triple invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7, and said triple invert emulsion being of hydrophilic phase/lipophilic phase/hydrophilic phase type which comprises an external hydrophilic phase and a lipophilic phase  
15 constituting, with an inner hydrophilic phase, an invert emulsion.
11. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, further comprising one or more active agents selected from the group consisting of isoflavonoids, metalloproteinase inhibitors, carotenoids, antiglycation compounds, NO-synthase  
20 inhibitors, vitamins, desquamating agents, compounds increasing the synthesis of glycosaminoglycans, anti-irritant compounds, compounds reducing irritation of neurogenic origin, muscle-relaxing compounds and depigmenting agents.
12. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, comprising a  
25 cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA.
13. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of a precursor of DHEA.

14. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 13, said DHEA precursor being selected from the group consisting of  $\Delta^5$ -pregnenolone, 17 $\alpha$ -hydroxypregnenolone, diosgenin, hecogenin, hecogenin acetate, smilagenin and sarsapogenin.

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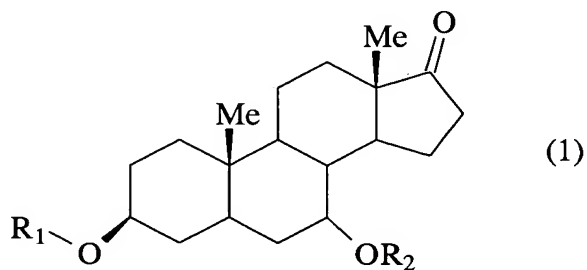
15. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA derivative.

16. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 15, said DHEA derivative being selected from the group consisting of 7- $\alpha$ -OH-DHEA, 7- $\beta$ -OH-DHEA, 7-keto-DHEA, 5-androstene-3,17-diol and 4-androstene-3,17-dione.

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17. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 15, said DHEA derivative having the following structural formula (1):

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in which  $R_1$  and  $R_2$  are, independently, a linear, branched or cyclic, saturated or unsaturated,  $C_1$ - $C_{12}$  alkyl radical which may optionally contain one or more heteroatoms, and may be optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from among -OR' and/or -SR' and/or -COOR' and/or -NR'R' and/or halogen and/or sulfate and/or phosphate and/or aryl and/or heterocycle, with the proviso that said heterocycle is an indole, a pyrimidine, a piperidine, a morpholine, a pyran, a furan, a piperazine, a pyridine; an alkylcarbonyl radical, in which the

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C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>24</sub> alkyl moiety is linear, branched or cyclic, saturated or unsaturated, and is optionally substituted with one or more groups selected from among -OR' and/or -SR' and/or -COOR' and/or -NR'R' and/or halogen and/or sulfate and/or phosphate and/or aryl and/or heterocycle, with the proviso that said heterocycle is an indole, a pyrimidine, a piperidine, a morpholine, a pyran, a furan, a piperazine, a pyridine; an arylcarbonyl radical or an arylalkylcarbonyl radical optionally substituted with one or more groups -OR' and/or -SR' and/or -COOR' and/or -NR'R' and/or halogen and/or aryl and/or heterocycle; a group O=P(OH)OR'; a group (O)<sub>2</sub>SOR'; a trialkylsilyl (SiR'<sub>3</sub>) group in which the 3 groups R' may be identical or different; a carbonyloxyalkyl (R'OCO) group; a carbonylaminealkyl (R'NHCO) group, in which R' is a hydrogen atom, a linear, branched or cyclic, saturated or unsaturated, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>12</sub> alkyl radical which may optionally contain one or more heteroatoms, optionally functionalized with one or more groups -OR'', -COOR'', halogen, -NR''R''; or with an aryl radical optionally functionalized with one or more groups -OR'', -COOR'', halogen, or -NR''R'', in which R'' is a hydrogen atom, a linear, branched or cyclic, saturated or unsaturated alkyl radical, with the proviso that in each of the groups -NR'R' and -NR''R'', the substituents R' and R'' are identical or different.

18. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 15, said DHEA derivative comprising 3-O-acetyl-7-benzoyloxydehydroepiandrosterone.

19. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, comprising from 0.001% to 20% by weight of said DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof.

20. The stable invert emulsion as defined by Claim 1, comprising from 0.2% to 4% by weight of said DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof.

21. A topically applicable cosmetic/dermatological composition comprising a stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion which comprises a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7, formulated into a topically applicable, cosmetically/dermatologically acceptable medium therefor.
22. The cosmetic/dermatological composition as defined by Claim 21, comprising from 0.001% to 5% by weight of DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof; from 30% to 100% by weight of said dispersed hydrophilic phase; and from 0.5% to 8% by weight of said emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.
23. The cosmetic/dermatological composition as defined by Claim 22, further comprising up to 5% by weight of a coemulsifier having an HBL greater than 6.
24. The cosmetic/dermatological composition as defined by Claim 23, further comprising up to 50% by weight of water.
25. A regime or regimen for preventing or treating chronological or actinic skin aging, comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment, a stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.

26. A regime or regimen for treating and/or protecting the skin, the mucous membranes or the keratinous fibers, comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment, a stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or  
5 chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.
27. A regime or regimen for preventing or treating canities, comprising  
10 administering to an individual in need of such treatment, a stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous  
15 phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.
28. A regime or regimen for attenuating pigmented skin spots, comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment, a stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a  
20 cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.
- 25 29. A regime or regimen for preventing or treating atrophy of the skin or mucous membranes, comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment, a stable, recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a

glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.

30. A regime or regimen for preventing or treating vulvar or vaginal atrophy,  
5 comprising administering to an individual in need of such treatment, a stable,  
recrystallization-resistant invert emulsion comprising a  
cosmetically/therapeutically effective amount of DHEA and/or chemical and/or  
biological precursor or derivative thereof, said invert emulsion also comprising a  
glycolic or hydroglycolic dispersed hydrophilic phase, a lipophilic continuous  
10 phase and an emulsifier having an HLB ranging from 2 to 7.